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**PRESS RELEASE**

The U. S. Bureau of the Census 2003 state population estimates show Colorado's July 1, 2003 population to be 4,550,688. This population represented a 49,637 or 1.1% increase from a revised July 1, 2002 estimate of 4,501,051. The state's April 1, 2000 census count was 4,301,261.

Colorado's 1.1 percent growth rate for this twelve-month period ranks sixteenth. The fastest growing states for the year were: Nevada (3.4%), Arizona (2.6%), Florida (2.0%), Texas (1.8%), Georgia (1.7%) and Idaho (1.7%). Colorado ranks sixth -- ahead of Idaho -- in growth over the three-year period since the census in 2000.

The growth rate of 1.1% over the year represents a slowdown from last year's 1.7% and from the annual average growth rate of 2.7% for the previous eleven years. State demographers expect growth to remain slow in the coming year.

The U. S. Bureau of the Census estimates that of nearly Colorado's 50,000 increase in population that 37,000 was due to natural increase (births minus deaths) and that 13,000 of this was due to net in-migration. State demographers and economists had expected the number of net migrants to be slightly higher, closer to 16,000. While they expect the number of net migrants to be at that level as well in the coming year, and they are expected to rise

again the following years. The state's estimates of population change are tied to employment, school enrollment, and other data, while those of the Census Bureau are tied to income tax exemptions and Medicare enrollees.

The Demography Section's estimate of the state population for July 1, 2003 is 4,572,436 which is slightly higher than the Census Bureau's 4,550,668. This difference of approximately 20,000 is due to the Section's findings of missed populations in the 2000 census and small differences with the Census Bureau's estimates for 2001 and 2002.